

have increased relative to those of part-time employees.” More troubling is that 31 percent of respondents believe they will have more part-time workers 2 years from now.

There is bipartisan support for repealing this provision. This bill has 34 cosponsors—mostly Republicans, including every Republican member of this committee—but Senator DONNELLY and Senator MANCHIN of West Virginia, also a Democrat, support it.

Republicans have talked a lot about wanting to repair the damage of Obamacare. We have also talked about wanting to get results.

This bipartisan bill should be an important step to doing both.

In fact, this reminds me of why so many of us like being on this committee—because the issues we work on affect so many Americans.

When we talk about fixing No Child Left Behind, we’re talking about 50 million children in 100,000 public schools.

When we talk about making it simpler to apply for a Pell Grant to go to college, we’re talking about simplifying a form that 20 million families fill out each year.

When we talk about modernizing the Food and Drug Administration and making it easier for Americans to access lifesaving drugs, we’re talking about something that affects nearly every American.

But today we are focused on 2.6 million Americans who are mostly low-income and at risk of losing jobs and hours.

I look forward to hearing what our witnesses have to say.

TRIBUTE TO COMMEMORATE THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE RELEASE OF THE IRAN HOSTAGES

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I wish to commemorate in the RECORD the anniversary of the release of the Iran hostages on this date in 1981.

Soon the Senate will be consumed by a great debate regarding the proper strategic approach our Nation must take to ensure that Iran does not develop a nuclear weapons capability. Tomorrow, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will hear testimony from both State Department and the U.S. Treasury about the current state of play in negotiations with Iran. Next week, the Senate Banking Committee is meeting to consider perspectives on the strategic necessity of Iran sanctions that will further the debate. I, for one, welcome that important discussion, although I recognize that some of my colleagues hold views that are different from my own on how best to contain Iran.

There is, however, yet another important policy matter related to Iran that not only deserves but also demands the unified, bipartisan support of every Senator. Thirty-four years ago today, January 20, 1981, 52 of our fellow American citizens returned home after a harrowing 444-day ordeal of being illegally held hostage in Iran. We sent these diplomats, Foreign Service personnel, along with officers and enlisted members of our Armed Forces, to Iran in service to our Nation as they were seeking only to strengthen ties between our two countries. There was even an American businessman involved. Nevertheless, they all paid dearly for this service by being forced

to endure humiliating treatment, brutal interrogations, mental and physical torture, and even mock firing squad executions while their families suffered endless waiting and genuine fear of their loved ones’ imminent demise.

Although their return was a joyous occasion for our entire Nation and we celebrated as one people honoring our heroes, those 444 days took a toll not only on the hostages but also on their family members—a toll that continues for many to this day. Unfortunately, we failed to recognize both the long-term impact their incarceration experience and ill treatment would have on many of them and the support they would need. In many instances, the results have been tragic. Among the former hostages and their families, there have been suicides, advanced PTSD-type depression, divorces, alcoholism, and drug dependency. Unfortunately, Phil Ward, a communications officer from Virginia who committed suicide in the fall of 2012, was one who never fully recovered from the cruelty of those events.

We must help to ease this burden and provide these brave Americans with the same measure of justice and healing our courts have already awarded to other hostage victims and their families. While the Algiers Accords, the document which secured the release, bars the former hostages and their families from legal action against Iran for the brutality they endured, to this day they remain not only the first victims of modern hostage-taking but the only Americans barred from seeking justice from Iran. The former hostages and their families have already waited more than three decades to experience the full support of the government they so heroically served and to see some accountability by their captors. Therefore, I will soon introduce legislation to compensate the hostages and their families by assessing penalties on those who continue to do business with Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions policy. This legislation, however, represents but one solution to an issue that is three decades overdue. Another or perhaps an additional option would be to strongly recommend that as a condition of the ongoing nuclear negotiations, such compensation come directly from “frozen” assets that for more than a year now have been released to Iran at the rate of \$700 million a month.

Accordingly, I look forward to righting this injustice by working with any or all of my colleagues as we stand united in support of the former hostages and their families.

PENN STATE UNIVERSITY WOMEN’S VOLLEYBALL

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the Penn State University Nittany Lions Women’s Volleyball program for winning the 2014 National Collegiate Athletic Association, NCAA Championship.

Led by four returning starters and legendary coach Russ Rose, the Penn State University Nittany Lions concluded the 2014 season by defeating the Brigham Young University Cougars in straight sets to win the NCAA Championship. The Nittany Lions finished with a record of 36 wins and only 3 losses.

With the 2014 championship, the Nittany Lions have claimed six of the last eight NCAA Championships and seven overall in women’s volleyball, setting the record for the most women’s volleyball championships by a single program in history.

The 2014 Nittany Lions Women’s Volleyball team brought together a group of student-athletes who excelled both on the court and in the classroom. For their efforts on the court, four Nittany Lions were selected to the AVCA Division I All-America team, with Senior Micha Hancock earning both First-Team All-American honors and becoming the fourth Nittany Lion in program history to earn AVCA DI National Player of the Year honors.

Special congratulations go to Junior Megan Courtney who was selected as the 2014 NCAA Tournament Most Outstanding Player and to Freshman Ali Frantti, who earned AVCA DI National Freshman of the Year honors.

Not to be outdone in the classroom, six Nittany Lions earned spots on the Fall Academic All-Big Ten list for their academic performances this season.

Today I want to recognize the significant contributions that the Penn State University Women’s Volleyball team has made to collegiate athletics and to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with Coach Russ Rose at the helm. I wish them all the best as they continue to lead by example for student-athletes everywhere and set the stage for the program’s continued success into the future.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, today the United States ranks 12th in the world in the percentage of 25-34 year olds achieving post-high school degrees. We need to make changes that help keep students engaged in their futures while also ensuring our educational programs are adequately preparing students for the jobs of the 21st century.

Career and technical education, CTE, programs are proven to help keep students more engaged in the classroom and less likely to drop out of high school, and to help meet the needs of high-growth, skill-intensive industries looking for the next generation of workers. The U.S. Department of Education announced that the average U.S. high school graduation rate is 80 percent, while the graduation rate for students in CTE concentrations is higher than 90 percent. 81 percent of high school dropouts say real-world learning opportunities would have kept them in school.

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act is a major source of Federal support for the development

of career and technical skills among secondary and postsecondary students. Last reauthorized in 2006, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act needs to be modernized to meet the demands of the 21st century workforce and ensure that students have access to the highest-quality CTE programs.

This is why I am pleased to introduce with my colleagues, Senator PORTMAN and Senator BALDWIN, the Educating Tomorrow's Workforce Act, which would amend the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act to raise the quality of CTE programs. This legislation defines what constitutes a rigorous CTE curriculum and requires Perkins grant recipients to incorporate key high-quality elements in their programs including credit-transfer opportunities; academic and technical skills assessments; training tools that align with today's industries; CTE-focused professional development for teachers, administrators, and counselors; and CTE curriculum alignment with local, regional, and State workforce demands. Additionally, the bill improves links between high school and postsecondary education to help ease attainment of an industry recognized credential, license, apprenticeship, or postsecondary certificate to obtain a job in a high-demand career field and promotes partnerships between local businesses, and other community stakeholders to create pathways for students through work-based learning opportunities.

When I was Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, I worked on a number of educational issues, but one that I was most proud of was starting the Governor's Career and Technical Academies. At the start of my term as Governor we had nine academies. The Republican Governor who followed me continued the academies, and at the end of his term there were 23. The Educating Tomorrow's Workforce Act encourages these models and allows states and localities to use Perkins grant funding to establish CTE-focused academies.

I am proud to introduce this commonsense, bipartisan legislation to raise the quality of CTE programs and ensure that high-quality career and technical education helps students develop skills that meet the needs of 21st century employers.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING DALTON VERNON MARTIN

• Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I wish to honor the memory and service of Dalton Vernon Martin, chief petty officer, U.S. Navy, Retired, and sheriff's deputy, East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Department, who passed away 4 years ago, on January 23, 2011. Mr. Martin devoted his life and career to the service of others which was evident in his com-

bined 61 years of military and civil service to our great Nation and the Baton Rouge community.

Born in St. Francisville, LA, Mr. Martin first excelled as a high school boxer, compiling a record of 63 victories in 65 bouts. He dedicated that resolve and fighting spirit towards serving and defending his country, enlisting in the U.S. Navy to fight in World War II and the Korean war, including the Pacific battles of the Gilbert and Marshall Islands, Tarawa, and Okinawa. Mr. Martin served onboard the USS *Charleston*, USS *Taswell*, and the USS *Indianapolis*.

After a distinguished 38-year career in the Armed Forces, Mr. Martin retired from active duty and embarked on a new mission of service as a deputy of the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office. Here, Mr. Martin spent 23 years protecting his fellow citizens and upholding the rule of law.

Mr. Martin lived a life of service, but he never sought to label himself as the hero he truly was. He spoke honestly and openly about the fear and sadness that are inseparable from the glory and honor of serving in combat. He was grateful for the opportunities afforded by his service to visit the farthest reaches of the world, but he served for no other reason than to defend his country and one day return home to his beloved Louisiana.

If the measure of a person is by what they leave behind, then Mr. Martin sets a standard to which we should all aspire. His life's story is yet another testament to the strength and legacy of the "greatest generation." And for his wife Christy, his children Paul, John, and Susan, and his grandchildren Erin, Tristan, Madeleine, Jack, Lauren, and Caroline, his spirit and legacy live on. The country he helped to preserve as the greatest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world remains forever grateful. •

TRIBUTE TO MATTHEW J. WATTS

• Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I wish to honor Pastor Matthew Watts, a dear friend and a truly inspiring West Virginian whose ministry career spans more than three decades.

I have personally known Reverend Watts for many years now, and he truly embodies what it means to be a great West Virginian. He is a man of deep conviction and unwavering passion for justice. He is an uplifting force to many and a role model to many more.

I have known Pastor Watts for many years, and as the former Governor, the reverend would visit often and bring me his thoughts, suggestions, and ideas. I always appreciated his sincere candor and genuine interest in improving our state.

As a native of Mount Hope, located in beautiful Fayette County, Pastor Watts currently serves as senior pastor of the Grace Bible Church of Charleston. He is a graduate of the West Vir-

ginia Institute of Technology with a bachelor of science in civil engineering, which led to a 20-year career with the Union Carbide Corporation. His theological study and training from the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago and the Christian Research and Development Center in Philadelphia, combined with his years of experience in corporate America, have blessed him with a vitally unique perspective on economic development.

In December of 1996, he left Union Carbide to pursue his ministry and focus on community service projects. A year later, he established the HOPE Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit organization with the mission of empowering inner-city communities through spiritual renewal, education, employment training and economic development.

With this perspective, he developed Kingdom Management Consultants, which assists minority owned businesses with startup and expansion, as well as provides supportive strategies to those seeking employment.

His active community involvement has truly set the standard in West Virginia throughout the years. Much of his community service is still done through the HOPE Community Development Corporation, which now has a branch specifically for youth.

Reverend Watts always amazes me with his unique ability to relate to strangers. While he is strong in stature and his voice is so commanding, his approach is dynamic, sincere, and composed.

His years of unwavering service and leadership have certainly not gone unrecognized. In 1996, he received the West Virginia Small Business Administration's Small Business Advocate of the Year Award. In 2002, Pastor Watts was awarded the Washington Times Foundation Leadership Award for Faith Based Organization of the Year. He was also the 2004 recipient of the Crown of Peace Award for Exemplary Leadership in Reconciliation and Peacemaking from the Inter-religious and International Peace Council.

Pastor Watts is a strong leader, mentor, and friend to so many within West Virginia. It takes a truly remarkable individual to accomplish so much in community service. Particularly now, having just celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and as we near Black History Month, it is fitting that we should celebrate such an inspiring individual as Pastor Watts. His community service programs have empowered countless minority groups within our State and are sure to continue the tradition of excellence for many years to come. •

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.